

Remarks

Amendment to claim 32

Claim 32 has been amended to improve its clarity. In particular, the claim has been amended to delete the reference to "radially" in context of the movement of the molding/demolding strips. Applicants submit that the molding/demolding strips of claim 32 are said to be "arranged movably on said at least one substantially planar surface." However, their movement was described later in the claim as "radially outward." Applicants submits that the term "radially" interferes with the clarity of the claim, since a radial movement requires an axis or point from which such a movement "radiates." In the case of an outward movement from a substantially planar surface, such an axis or point would be in a potentially infinite distance. Thus, Applicants submit that the reference to "radial" constitutes verbiage which should be deleted from the claim for the sake of its clarity. Applicants submit that the amendment to the claim does not require an additional search or examination. The reasons for patentability of claim 32 are not affected by the amendment. The error was only noted during a final review of the application and thus could not be corrected earlier.

No new matter has been introduced by this amendment.

Comments on Statement for Reasons of Allowance

The Examiner refers in his reasons for allowance to three references not previously cited, namely U.S. Patent No. 5,057,259 to Parmelee and U.S. Patent Nos. 4,431,399 and 4,350,656 to Moertel.

The Examiner states that the prior art of record does not teach forming a panel having undercut shapes thereon by extruding material into a roll nip wherein the mold roll, having molds which form the undercut shapes, has molding/de-molding strip(s)

which move radially outward in order to release. The Examiner further states that, although the prior art teaches a mold roll having a mold band which moves radially outward to release undercut portions (Parmelee and Moertel) , no motivation is currently present to combine such mold roll (with movable strips) with a backing roll to form a roll nip.

Initially, Applicants would like to point out that none of claims 28, 29, 30, or 32 recite a mold roll or a roll nip, while the reasons for allowance refer to these two elements. Accordingly, it is Applicants understanding that the reasons for allowance only relate to those claims that refer, directly or by dependency, to "roll(s)" and "roll nip(s)," that are, claims 1, 3-6, 19-27 and 31.

Applicants also note that the Examiner refers to three new references in his reasons for allowance. By citing these references in the reasons for allowance, Applicants' ability of commenting on these new references is confined to the format of these comments.

Applicants argued in the last response that Menzin et al., the base reference for the Examiner's 37 U.S.C. §103 rejection in the Office Action of June 25, 2003, teach an arrangement of radially movable spacer plates (30) and stationary mold plates (29). Applicants further argued that during the molding process, the spacer plates (30) are maintained in their outward position to form, in combination with the mold plates, molding units. The spacer plates (30) are retracted during the release of the molded plastic material.

With respect to the secondary reference cited by the Examiner to support the 37 U.S.C. §103 rejection, namely Stickney, Applicants argued that Stickney is directed to the production of lath boards. During the production process Stickney's material is forced through two rolls which brings about the effect of a reciprocating press. Ejectors

49 are actuated to release the material from roll 7 and to assist in the secure transfer of the material to roll 8 (See Fig. 3 and page 3, lines 65-96).

Applicants respectfully submitted that there is no motivation to inverse Menzin's release mechanism nor any reasonable expectation of success if one were to do so. In fact, facilitating release of Menzin et al.'s molded material by an outward movement of the molding strip would place the plastic material under additional, potentially destructive, tension. Thus, Applicants argued the person skilled in the art would not only be not motivated to combine the references, but even if he/she were, he/she would expect such a combination to be disadvantageous.

However, the Examiner now alleges that the newly cited prior art, namely Parmelee and the two Moertel references, teach a mold roll having a mold band which moves radially outward to release undercut portions.

Applicants disagree with this statement for at least one or more of the reasons listed below. The reasons listed below should not be considered exhaustive.

Parmelee:

- Applicants submit that this reference does not teach undercut portions, certainly not undercut attachments.
- Applicants submit that this reference does not teach moving molding/demolding strips radially outward as required by claims 1, 3-6, 19-27 and 31.

Moertel references:

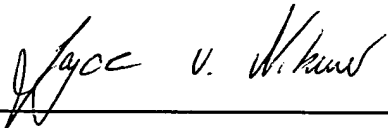
- Applicants submit that the Moertel references teach moving mold bands.
- Applicants submit that neither of these reference teaches moving molding/demolding strips radially outward as required by claims 1, 3-6, 19-27 and 31.

Applicants submit that the newly cited references do not teach or make obvious all the elements the claimed invention.

Applicants also note that neither of the Moertel references teach or suggest providing two rolls forming a roll nip, at least one of the rolls being provided with movable molding/demolding strips which are adapted to release undercut attachments.

Applicants also note that none of the newly cited references teach or suggest providing at least one substantially planar surface of a heated plate and a countersurface, wherein said at least one substantially planar surface is provided with mold(s) which correspond to undercut attachment(s), wherein the mold(s) are provided in molding/demolding strip(s) which are arranged movably on said at least one substantially planar surface.

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